

MAY DAY & AFTER

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Memo to the DD/P Via: A/C DPD

Subject: Presidential Policy re Intelligence Activities Exposure

From: Ch/Intel Sect/DPD/OPS [REDACTED]

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"...The following suggestion is not offered as something that should or could have been done prior to the 1 May incident. It is predicated on the unique circumstances which now exist as a result of all that has happened during the past month, and in particular, on the newly acquired sophistication of the Congress and the American people with regard to intelligence collection activities.

"In essence, it is proposed that the President, at his next press conference or in some other public forum, describe in precise terms the future policy of the White House with regard to any exposure or public inquiry concerning the intelligence activities of this nation.

"The substance of this policy should be that neither the President nor members of the White House Executive Offices will publicly comment on such activities, other than in the most general terms, nor will they confirm or deny knowledgeability or official sanction by the Chief Executive of any given intel. program. This policy should be adhered to consistently, without regard for the nature and scope of the exposure and without reference to the accuracy or inaccuracy of the allegations.

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"The President could further point out that this is not a reversal nor is it incompatible with his decision after the 1 May incident to

publicly assume responsibility for the U-2 overflights. That decision under the circumstances was, and still is, believed to have been a valid one. It was essential in order to refute allegations of "irresponsibility" and "military adventuring" which, although baseless, might have won universal acceptance had they not been answered.

"If a question should arise as to why such a policy was not established prior to the 1 May incident, it could be argued that such a statement of policy prior to the recent events might well have been incomprehensible to the general public, particularly with regard to its motivation. It is only against the background of what has occurred that such a policy can be instituted and effectively implemented with the sympathy and understanding of an enlightened public and Congress, and without fear that groundless charges of the "irresponsibility" type will be given credence.

"I believe that the proposed policy, if adopted, would effectively shield the President and the White House Staff from embarrassment resulting from the miscarriage of any future clandestine activity. I do not believe that it can be effective, however, unless it is stated openly and for the record. It fully meets, at least for any future contingency, the basic criticism of the Chairman of the SFRCommittee concerning the handling of the U-2 incident. I further believe that it will be received favorably by an overwhelming majority of Congressmen, the general public, our Allies and representatives of news media. I can see no more realistic approach to a problem which could recur at any time."